

Continuing Professional Development

Guidelines

1. Introduction

1.1 With ever-changing legislative measures and increased regulation, it is essential that Members keep up to date and continue to develop their knowledge and skills in the field of trust and estate work. This is recognised in article 5 of the Code of Professional Conduct which states:

“A member shall ensure that he keeps himself at all times technically competent to advise and is fully abreast of developments in his areas of professional expertise. To this end he shall comply with the rules of the Society’s Continuing Professional Development scheme”

This is intended to ensure that Members maintain a high standard of professional practice and so protect the interests of their clients and of the Society.

1.2 Members of the Society must be prepared to meet the obligations necessary to enable them to uphold the reputation of the Society and to provide the best possible service to their clients.

1.3 The Continuing Professional Development (CPD) scheme was introduced in April 1997 and reviewed and updated in April 2007. There are reduced requirements for some Members and flexibility in the way the CPD requirements can be met (see paragraph 3 below).

1.4 The CPD scheme is structured::

1.4.1 To be relevant to the needs of Members in their professional lives and to fit within the scope of each individual member’s ongoing professional development programme.

1.4.2 To be flexible enough to cater for particular circumstances (e.g. a career break).

1.4.3 To be straightforward to manage and complete.

2. The Rules of the Society’s Continuing Professional Development scheme

2.1 The minimum requirement is 35 hours per CPD year, of which 15 hours must be structured training as defined below. The CPD year commences on 1 April annually and ends on 31 March in the following calendar year. For Members joining part way through the CPD year, CPD will apply on a pro-rata basis .

2.2 At the end of the CPD year the self-certification form should be completed by the Member and retained with the Member’s CPD record forms. Records should be kept for

a minimum of six years. Members are required to confirm that they have completed their annual CPD requirement by signing the declaration on the Membership subscription remittance advice issued in March each year.

2.3 A random sample audit of CPD records will be carried out on an annual basis.

3. Requirements for special categories

3.1 The following requirements apply:

Membership circumstances	Membership category	Structured CPD	Unstructured CPD
3.1.1 Temporarily engaged in other full-time work not related to trusts and/or estates	Seconded	None	30 hours
3.1.2 Non-earner, e.g. ill health, career break, redundancy, maternity leave	Non-earner	None	30 hours
3.1.3 Retired and not in receipt of remuneration for any advice or work connected with trusts and/or estates	Retired	None	None
3.1.4 Working part-time in trusts and /or estates, 3 days or less per week*	Full	10 hours	25 hours

* STEP members are expected, however many days they work, to ensure they are competent to meet the reasonable expectations of their clients in dealing with trust and estate work

Claims for special category requirement should accompany each annual renewal of membership.

3.1.5 Discretion to grant any additional CPD reductions is reserved to the Council of the Society.

3.2 Where Members come within any of the above categories for only part of a CPD year the exemption will apply for that part only, on a pro-rata basis where appropriate.

4 Definition and examples of Structured Training

4.1 All learning events, relevant to trust and estate practitioners, involving interaction with other individuals (as contributors or as an audience), completion of interactive printed material by an authorised provider, or some form of assessment.

4.2 Use of learning media in a group (including group research; listening to audio tapes; viewing videos and television programmes; using video discs and computer-based training packages

4.2 Preparation of lectures or other forms of presentation.

4.3 Writing books, articles or reviews for the benefit of others.

4.4 Attendance at conferences, seminars, workshops, discussion meetings or similar events involving active contributions.

5 Definition and examples of Unstructured Training

5.1 Any form of learning where there is no interaction with other individuals. This would include the use of learning media where it is undertaken on a personal basis and in isolation.

5.2 Informal, personal research.

5.3 Reading.

6 Non-core Subjects

6.1 Structured and unstructured training must, of course, relate to the field of trust and estate work.

6.2 It is nevertheless appreciated that Members must often keep up to date on the related topics of law, accounting, banking and financial services. Such study can count for up to 50 per cent of the CPD requirements.

7 CPD Requirements of other Professional Bodies

7.1 It is appreciated that Members of the Society may also be Members of other professional bodies having CPD (or its equivalent) requirements or recommendations.

7.2 It is recognised that a single activity, such as attendance at a conference, may satisfy the CPD requirement of more than one professional body simultaneously.

8 CPD Requirements of Professional Firms

8.1 Some professional firms have their own CPD requirements and these too may be fulfilled simultaneously.

8.2 If the professional firm's CPD requirements are for a year end of other than 31 March, the appropriate year for that particular firm which ends in the CPD year in question can be used instead, as long as the requirements of the Society are met on a "year to year" basis.

9 Conference Providers

9.1 Conference providers normally self-assess on an hourly basis, subject to a maximum of six hours per day (or a maximum of seven hours for each full day of a residential conference). It is the responsibility of Members to determine that the conference is at the appropriate level (i.e. post qualification). The Society organises a range of meetings and conferences. Attendance at these should enable Members to meet their CPD requirements.

10 Records to be Kept

10.1 A personal record sheet can be obtained from the STEP Office or from the STEP website. Completion of this record sheet is not compulsory but may assist in record keeping. CPD requirements will be met as long as the Member can produce records to demonstrate compliance. The self-certification form must be completed annually and retained by the Member for six years, together with suitable supporting documents.

10.2 Where Members attend a training meeting (other than those organised by their own firm) and no charge is made for attendance, they must record their attendance in the record book kept by the organisers.

10.3 The Society will undertake random monitoring by requesting some Members to submit their CPD records covering a one year period. Letters requesting both CPD self-certification forms and CPD records will be sent out in the second quarter of each year.

11 Failure to Meet the CPD Requirements

11.1 If a Member fails to meet the requirements in a particular year the following process will be initiated:

11.1.1 He/she will be required to achieve sufficient additional CPD hours in the following year to meet the shortfall. He/she will be monitored for this year.

11.2 The Disciplinary Panel will consider what further action is appropriate if a Member fails to meet these requirements.

11.3 Investigation of any complaint against a Member will include a review of the Member's CPD records.